

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

t°

H 33° C

L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

t°

H 35° C

L 26° C

TIRUPATHI

t°

H 36° C

L 26° C

FIR Filed Against Arvind Kejriwal and AAP Leaders for Public Property Violations

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi Police has registered a First Information Report (FIR) against Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor and former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, along with other party leaders, for alleged violations of the Public Property Act. The case is currently being heard in Rouse Avenue Court, with the next hearing scheduled for April 18.

The FIR was filed following a directive from a Delhi court, which ordered the police to take action against Kejriwal and other leaders in response to a complaint by Shiv Kumar Saxena. Saxena provided evidence in court, claiming that large posters and banners of AAP were illegally displayed in the Dwarka area of Delhi.

On March 11, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Neha Mittal issued an order for the police to register an FIR against Kejriwal and others over the defacement of public property. Saxena had submitted visual proof of unauthorised hoardings showcasing Kejriwal and other AAP leaders across the city.

The court took the matter seriously, pointing out that such unauthorised hoardings not only tarnish the city's aesthetics but also pose a traffic hazard. The court also high-

lighted previous incidents where illegal hoardings led to fatalities, making swift action crucial.

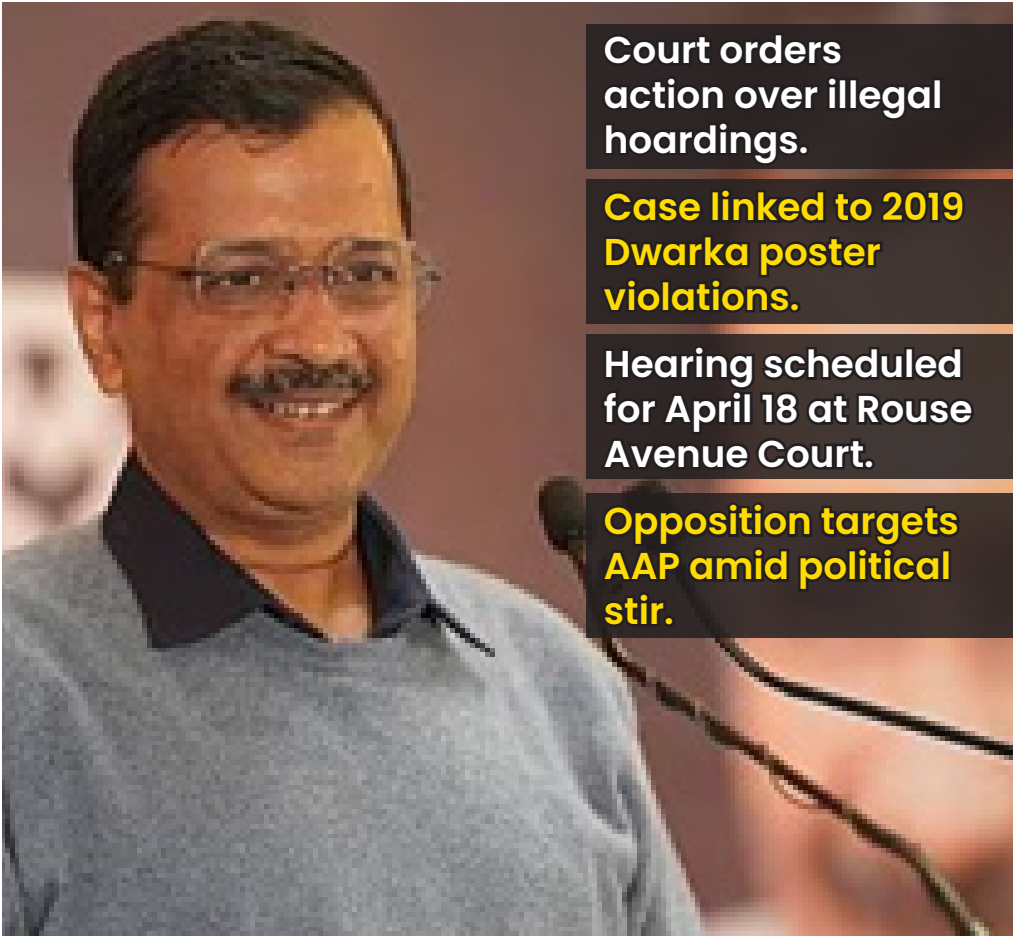
The FIR is filed under Section 3 of the Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Property Act, 2007. Along with Kejriwal, former MLA Gulab Singh and former councillor Nitika Sharma are also named in the FIR. The Delhi Police has filed a compliance report in the Rouse Avenue Court, confirming the registration of the FIR.

Court orders action over illegal hoardings.

Case linked to 2019 Dwarka poster violations.

Hearing scheduled for April 18 at Rouse Avenue Court.

Opposition targets AAP amid political stir.



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi's Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma announced on Thursday that he has instructed all concerned departments to remove "illegal" encroachments from public spaces, including stalls selling meat and fish.

The minister's statement came in response to a question raised during the ongoing Question Hour in the Delhi Assembly. Shakur Basti MLA Karnail Singh had raised concerns over meat being sold openly on roads and footpaths, especially during the ongoing Navratri festival, which is considered a significant religious period for Hindus. Singh argued that the sale of meat in these public spaces during such a time was hurtful to the sentiments of the Hindu community and requested immediate action.

In his response, Minister Parvesh Verma assured that the government would take prompt action to address the issue. He clarified that the Delhi government was committed to ensuring that public spaces remain clear of illegal encroachments, which include unau-

thorized vendors selling meat, fish, and other products. Verma's directive to the concerned departments is aimed at upholding the law and maintaining public order.

The issue of unauthorized street vendors and encroachments in public areas is a recurring problem in many parts of the city. While the Delhi government has taken steps in the past to address such concerns, including launching eviction drives and setting up designated markets, this latest directive emphasizes the need for stricter enforcement to maintain public spaces free from illegal activities.

As the Navratri festival is a time of fasting and religious observance for many Hindus, the issue raised by Karnail Singh has sparked further discussions on the balance between religious sensitivities and the regulation of public spaces in a diverse and vibrant city like Delhi.

The government's actions in this matter will likely be closely monitored in the coming days as authorities begin the process of clearing illegal encroachments and vendors from public areas.

Atishi questions Delhi govt's projected ₹1 lakh crore income: 'Hawa Hawai budget'

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) ignited a social media debate on X after highlighting citizens' frustrations over frequent power cuts across Delhi. The issue gained significant attention when residents from various localities reported continuous disruptions in their electricity supply, which led to a protest on the Outer Ring Road on Thursday night.

The protest, organized by the residents of Jagatpur village in Burari, saw locals blocking the road in frustration with the electricity department. They demanded immediate action to address the ongoing power outages that have disrupted daily life. The demonstrators voiced their anger over the prolonged power cuts, which they claimed were making life increasingly difficult, especially during the sweltering heat.

Former Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal responded to the protest by sharing a video of the demonstration on X. Expressing his dismay over the deteriorating power situation, Kejriwal criticized the BJP-led government for failing to address the ongoing electricity crisis in the city. He accused the BJP of mismanaging essential services, which he said had led to increased



inconvenience for Delhiites. Kejriwal's remarks were amplified by other AAP leaders, who echoed his concerns and used social media to rally public support. The party leaders argued that the BJP government was responsible for the worsening power situation in the national capital, and urged the government to prioritize fixing the electricity supply system. The power cuts have become a point of contention in the city, with residents expressing their frustration at the authorities' inability to provide a stable supply of electricity. As protests continue and public anger grows, the AAP has vowed to hold the BJP accountable for what it deems a failure in governance. The issue has also sparked a wider conversation on the need for improved infrastructure and services in Delhi, with citizens demanding better management of essential utilities.

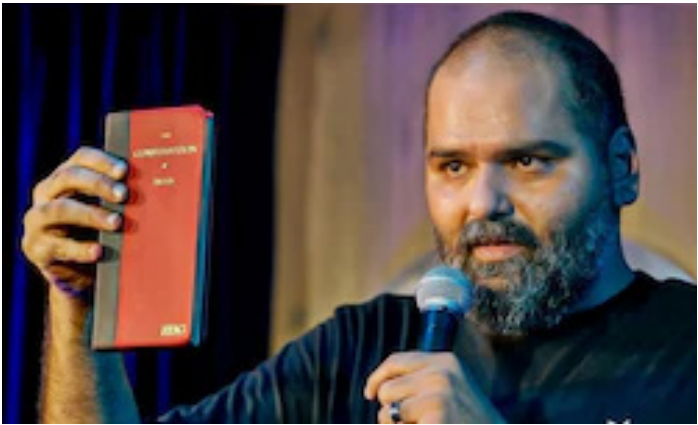
Madras HC Grants Interim Pre-Arrest Bail to Comedian Kunal Kamra in Eknath Shinde Case

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

All states and Union Territories (except West Bengal) have been successfully onboarded for the Madras High Court Grants Interim Pre-Arrest Bail to Comedian Kunal Kamra in Eknath Shinde Case

The Madras High Court on Friday granted stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra interim pre-arrest bail until April 7 in connection with a case involving his comments about Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Kamra, who had come under fire for his jokes about Shinde, sought transit anticipatory bail, expressing fears of arrest by the Mumbai Police.

Kamra, hailing from Villupuram district in Tamil Nadu, moved the high court after facing legal action over his parody per-



formance at the Habitat Comedy Club in Mumbai. During the show, Kamra made a "gaddar (traitor)" jibe at Shinde, which sparked strong protests from Shiv Sena supporters. The protests culminated in the vandalization of the comedy club and a hotel on Sunday night.

Justice Sunder Mohan, while granting Kamra interim relief, directed him to execute a bond to the satisfaction of the judicial magistrate at Vanur in Villupuram district. The judge also issued a notice to the Khar Police (second respondent) and scheduled the next hearing for April 7.

7.7 Magnitude Earthquake Devastates Myanmar and Thailand

Massive earthquake causes destruction across Myanmar and Thailand

Bangkok declares emergency zone; rescue operations underway

Historic sites in Bagan suffer extensive damage



TPN Correspondent | Southeast Asia

A powerful 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar near Mandalay on March 28, 2025, at 12:50 PM local time, causing widespread destruction across Southeast Asia. The earthquake was followed by an aftershock of 6.4 magnitude, further worsening the devastation.

In Myanmar, the quake led to severe damage, including the collapse of several buildings like Mandalay University and a mosque, with numerous casualties reported. Historic temples in the ancient city of Bagan, a UNESCO World Heritage site, also suffered significant damage. The military

Union Cabinet Approves ₹22,919 Crore Scheme for Electronics Component Manufacturing

- ₹4.56 lakh crore production expected.
- 91,600 new jobs to be created.
- Boost to electronics manufacturing.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced on Friday, March 28, 2025, that the Union Cabinet has approved a historic non-semiconductor electronics component manufacturing scheme under the production-linked incentive (PLI) program. With an outlay of ₹22,919 crore, the initiative is aimed at bolstering India's electronics manufacturing sector.

Vaishnaw highlighted the remarkable growth in India's electronics manufacturing, with a five-fold increase in production over the past years and a sixfold surge in exports. He pointed out that electronics has now become one of the top three export items in the country, underlining its importance in the national economy.

The new scheme extends the PLI initiative to cover the entire electronics manufacturing value chain, including the production of sub-assemblies and bare components, in addition to the already existing PLI for finished products. As part of the scheme, components such as capacitors, inductors, resistors, and connectors will now be manufactured domestically, addressing a critical gap in India's electronics supply chain.

"This move will significantly enhance value addition in India's electronics sector," Vaishnaw said, emphas-



sizing the potential benefits to the Indian economy. The scheme is expected to generate around 91,600 direct jobs, further boosting employment opportunities in the sector. Additionally, an estimated ₹4,56,000 crore worth of production is anticipated as a result of the scheme's implementation.

The cabinet's approval is seen as a strategic step toward reducing dependency on imports, strengthening India's position in the global electronics market, and fostering sustainable economic growth in the country. The move is also expected to support India's goal of becoming a manufacturing hub for electronics in the coming years.

AAP's Somnath Bharti challenges BJP's Satish Upadhyay's election before Delhi HC

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Thursday, March 27, 2025, agreed to examine the plea of AAP leader Somnath Bharti, who has challenged the election victory of BJP's Satish Upadhyay from the Malviya Nagar constituency in the recently held Delhi Assembly elections. Bharti, who contested from the same seat, alleges that Upadhyay was involved in "corrupt practices" under the Representation of People Act.



Justice Jasmeet Singh has scheduled the matter for hearing on April 8, 2025, directing Bharti to submit additional documents to support his claim that a criminal case against Upadhyay is pending. Bharti's petition claims that the pending case is relevant to the election results, which saw Upadhyay securing 39,564 votes, defeating Bharti.

During Thursday's proceedings, senior advocate Rajiv Nayar, representing Upadhyay, denied the allegations of a pending criminal case. Nayar questioned the existence of any such FIR, stating that Bharti needed to provide solid evidence and details backing his claims. The court, in response, instructed Bharti to file an affidavit providing specific details of the allegations, particularly the supposed criminal case.

Justice Singh emphasized that Bharti must

be clear in his statement, warning that making false statements in the affidavit would be a serious matter. The judge noted that the case is governed by the Representation of People Act, and the defendant, Upadhyay, is an elected member of the assembly. Therefore, it is essential to ensure the claims are substantiated and not based on vague or unsupported allegations.

This case follows similar petitions filed earlier this week challenging the election of BJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma from New Delhi, as well as the election of former Delhi Chief Minister Atishi from the Kalkaji constituency. These ongoing legal battles highlight the tension in the capital's political landscape after the February assembly elections.

Cash discovery row: Justice Varma transferred to Allahabad High Court

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Justice Yashwant Varma of the Delhi High Court has been transferred to his parent Allahabad High Court following controversy over the alleged discovery of cash at his official residence. The transfer was officially confirmed through a government notification issued on Friday by the Law Ministry.

Earlier this week, the Supreme Court Collegium recommended the transfer, emphasizing that the decision was separate from the ongoing in-house investigation into the allegations. The controversy surrounding Justice Varma emerged after an alleged discovery of cash from his residence following a fire that occurred on the night of Holi. The incident has drawn significant attention and has led to concerns regarding the propriety of the situation.

Despite the controversy, the Supreme Court Collegium clarified



that the transfer recommendation was not linked to the ongoing inquiry. This clarification aimed to avoid any perception of a connection between the transfer and the allegations. The in-

house probe is being conducted to investigate the circumstances surrounding the discovery of the cash, which remains a subject of scrutiny.

The transfer of Justice Varma to the Allahabad High Court comes as part of the regular judicial reshuffling, but the timing of the move has raised questions due to the ongoing controversy. Justice Varma's reputation has come under scrutiny following the incident, but his transfer to his parent high court is seen as a standard administrative decision.

As of now, the inquiry into the alleged discovery of cash is ongoing, and further developments are expected in the coming weeks. The legal community is awaiting the outcome of the investigation to determine whether any further actions will be taken regarding the allegations against Justice Varma.

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Madras HC Grants Interim Pre-Arrest Bail to Comedian Kunal Kamra in Eknath Shinde Case

Kamra's counsel argued that the comedian did not explicitly target anyone in his performance and defended his act as a form of satire and free speech. His lawyer emphasized that Kamra is a well-known comedian and that satire should be protected as part of his right to express himself. Additionally, Kamra's counsel expressed concerns over threats to his life, citing over 500 calls from Shiv Sena workers, some of which included violent threats.

Kamra has been booked by the

Khar Police following a complaint filed by Shiv Sena MLA Murji Patel for allegedly making defamatory remarks against Shinde. Kamra, however, stood by his comments, stating he would only apologize if instructed to by the court. The comedian denied rumors that he was paid by the Opposition to target Shinde.

The Mumbai Police had earlier summoned Kamra to appear on March 31 after a previous notice on Tuesday.

7.7 Magnitude Earthquake Devastates Myanmar and Thailand

government declared a state of emergency across six regions and initiated rescue operations, although efforts are hindered by ongoing political instability. Tremors were felt as far away as Bangkok, Thailand, where the shaking prompted evacuations and panic among residents. A 30-story government office under construction in the Chatuchak district collapsed, resulting in at least three deaths and trapping approximately 90 workers. Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra declared the capital an emergency zone, deploying police and emergency services for immediate rescue operations. The quake also led to the temporary suspension of metro services

in Bangkok and the closure of the Stock Exchange of Thailand for the day. Shaking was reported in Chiang Mai and other regions across Thailand, intensifying fears of aftershocks. The international community has responded swiftly with offers of assistance. India has already begun providing immediate aid to affected areas. Rescue operations are ongoing as authorities continue to assess the extent of the damage and provide relief to the affected populations. The full scale of the disaster remains uncertain, but the devastation caused by the powerful earthquake has left Southeast Asia reeling.

Kunal Kamra moves Madras high court seeking transit anticipatory bail after FIRs over 'traitor' joke

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra has approached the Madras High Court, seeking transit anticipatory bail after multiple FIRs were filed against him in Maharashtra for his alleged remarks on Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister. Kamra, known for his satirical comedy and candid opinions, has been accused of making derogatory comments that have sparked legal action and public outcry.



The incident has stirred tensions, with Shiv Sena MLA Muraji Patel filing the complaint against Kamra. Kamra's performance, held at the Habitat Studio in Mumbai, was reportedly disrupted by Shiv Sena party workers, who allegedly ransacked the venue and accused the comedian of defaming their leader.

Kamra, a permanent resident of Villupuram in Tamil Nadu, argues that the Madras High Court has jurisdiction over the case. The comedian filed an urgent plea before Justice Sunder Mohan on Friday, March 28, requesting protection from arrest as he faces the legal charges.

The controversy stems from Kamra's

parody song that contained a reference to a "gaddar" (traitor), which did not explicitly name anyone but reportedly offended Shiv Sena workers. The act led to a Zero FIR being lodged against Kamra, which was initially filed under sections related to public mischief and defamation (Sections 353(1)(b), 353(2), and 356(2) of the Indian Penal Code). The FIR was later transferred to the Khar police station in Mumbai for further investigation.

Kamra's legal team is now seeking anticipatory bail as the comedian prepares to challenge the charges, while also questioning the legality of the FIRs lodged in Maharashtra. His petition emphasizes the jurisdiction of the Madras High Court, given his permanent residency in Tamil Nadu. Kamra's supporters and free speech advocates have rallied behind him, arguing that his comments are protected under the right to freedom of expression.

Delhi HC issues notice to L-G VK Saxena in activist Medha Patkar's plea

TPN Correspondent| Delhi

Delhi High Court Seeks Response from Lt. Governor on Medha Patkar's Plea

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed Delhi Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena to respond to a plea filed by activist Medha Patkar. Patkar is challenging a trial court order that denied her request to examine a witness who was not initially included in the list of witnesses.

Justice Shalinder Kaur, presiding over the matter, declined to stay the ongoing trial but issued a notice to the Lieutenant Governor, who is the sole respondent in Patkar's petition before

the High Court.

Patkar, known for her social activism, had filed a petition after the trial court refused to allow her to examine a new witness. The witness in question had not been mentioned in the original witness list, leading the trial court to reject Patkar's request. However, Patkar argues that the witness's testimony is crucial to her case, and the refusal to examine this individual hinders her right to a fair trial.

The Delhi High Court's notice to the Lieutenant Governor marks a significant step in the legal proceedings. While the trial continues, the court's



decision to seek a response indicates that it may review the lower court's order.

Patkar's plea emphasizes the importance of considering all relevant evidence to ensure a just and fair trial. The matter is expected to be further addressed by the court, as both sides prepare for the next stages of legal proceedings.

BJP-Backed Motion in Delhi Assembly Disposes of Old Cases Against Bureaucrats



- **Vijender Gupta called them an attempt to target Delhi government officers.**
- **Eight cases are still under Delhi High Court review.**
- **Motion passed unanimously, allowing the new Assembly to start afresh.**

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi Assembly passed a motion to "dispose of" multiple cases against senior bureaucrats that had been pending before various House committees for several years. These cases were primarily related to complaints lodged by AAP MLAs during the party's 10-

year rule in Delhi. The majority of the complaints targeted top IAS officers who had served in the Delhi government.

Speaker Vijender Gupta pointed out that many of these cases had been unresolved since 2016, with no meetings held to investigate them. He suggested that the delay in

addressing these complaints appeared to be a targeted attempt against officers of the Delhi government.

The motion was introduced by BJP MLA Abhay Verma, who emphasized the importance of moving forward without lingering grievances. He stated that the House should resolve to consider the cases disposed of and allow the newly formed 8th Assembly to begin its work free from the weight of unresolved issues.

Some of the senior officers involved in the cases, including former Delhi Chief Secretaries Anshu Prakash and MM Kutti, now hold prominent positions in the Centre and various states. Other officers such as Manisha Saxena, Varsha Joshi, Sanjiv Khirwar, Amit Singhla, and Jaidev Sarangi were also named in the complaints.

Gupta also highlighted the backlog in the Committees on Privileges, Petitions, and Questions and References, noting that there were 59 pending cases from the 6th Legislative Assembly and 69 from the 7th. He added that the committee's failure to investigate these matters had led to a situation where cases were now under review by the Delhi High Court.

With the BJP-dominated House passing the resolution by voice vote, the motion to dispose of the cases paves the way for a fresh start in the 8th Assembly, aiming to avoid political motivations and ensure that the new assembly can proceed without the shadow of these long-standing complaints.

Priyanka Gandhi Honors Soldiers and Lauds Kerala's Panchayat System in Wayanad Visit



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress General Secretary and Wayanad MP, praised the sacrifices made by soldiers in upholding the freedom of citizens, which many take for granted. Speaking at the inauguration of the Veer Jawan Thalachira Janeesh Smrithi Mandapam in Elumannam, near Mananthavady, on Friday (March 28, 2025), she highlighted the importance of martyrs' memorials as reminders of the price paid for the freedoms enjoyed today.

"Martyrs' memorials remind us that what we have today has come at a cost, and there are those who sacrificed for it," said Vadra, reflecting on the role of soldiers in ensuring national security.

She also expressed pride in the functioning of panchayats in Kerala, which she described as a model for the rest of the country. Recalling Mahatma Gandhi's vision of freedom for

all, she noted that her father, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, had worked to fulfill this vision by passing the Panchayat Raj Act.

Vadra commended the Haritha Karma Sena for their pivotal role in making Edavaka a 'Zero-Waste Grama Panchayat,' recognizing their efforts as equally important to the soldiers' sacrifices. She released the citation for the zero-waste panchayat and the Local Climate Change Action Plan developed by the panchayat on the occasion.

The event was presided over by Panchayat President Pallikkal Ahammed Kutty Bran. The memorial, built on land donated by Kunhiraman Nair Memorial Trust, honors Thalachira Janeesh, a soldier who died during an anti-terror operation in Jammu and Kashmir in 2003. Janeesh was awarded the Sena Medal for his service, and his memorial serves as a tribute to his bravery and sacrifice.

CM Adityanath to Visit Lucknow Rehab Centre After Deaths and Illnesses of Special Needs Children

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is scheduled to visit the Nirvan Rajkiya Bal Grih, a government-run rehabilitation centre in Lucknow, following the tragic deaths of four special needs children and the illness of more than a dozen others. The children reportedly fell ill after consuming contaminated water, officials said. The visit is set for Friday morning at 10 am.

The Nirvan Rajkiya Bal Grih, located in the Para area of Lucknow, houses 147 children, many of whom are orphans or suffer from mental disabilities. On Tuesday, over 20 children at the centre fell ill and were transferred to the Lok Bandhu Raj Narayan Combined Hospital for treatment. Among them, 16 children are still receiving care for their ailments.

According to Lucknow District Magistrate Vishak G, four children—two boys and two girls, aged between 12 and 17—

have tragically passed away. Their bodies have been sent for post-mortem, and the viscera will be preserved for further analysis to determine the exact cause of death. Health Minister and Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak visited the hospital on Thursday to oversee the treatment of the affected children.

Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob suggested that the contaminated water could have been the cause of the illness, but the district administration has launched a formal investigation to determine the exact circumstances surrounding the incident.

This tragedy has drawn significant attention to the condition of the shelter home and the safety measures in place for vulnerable children. Chief Minister Adityanath's visit is expected to bring focus to the immediate investigation and efforts to prevent such incidents from occurring again in the future.



DELHI POLITICS

BJP Slams Mamata Banerjee Over Comments on India's Economic Growth Projection



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday criticized West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee after she reportedly objected to a forecast that predicted India would become the world's largest economy by 2060.

Mamata Banerjee, who is currently in the United Kingdom, made her remarks during a conversation at Kellogg College, University of Oxford, while discussing "Social Development - Girl, Child, and Women Empowerment in West Bengal." A video clip shared by BJP IT cell head Amit Malviya shows Banerjee disagreeing with the projection that India will become the world's largest economy by 2060.

The moderator of the session had stated, "India has already overtaken the UK; we are now the 6th largest economy, and India is the fifth largest economy. Soon, it will be the third-largest economy in the world. By 2060, it is predicted that it will be the first economy in the world." In response, Banerjee said, "I will differ that," expressing her disagreement with the forecast.

'India Concerned About Minorities In Pakistan': Tharoor On Jaishankar's Speech In Parliament

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor expressed concern over the well-being of minorities in Pakistan after External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar highlighted data on crimes and atrocities committed against these communities in the neighboring country. Tharoor, speaking to reporters outside Parliament on Friday, remarked that India's concern for Pakistan's minorities was clear, but emphasized that the lack of dialogue between the two countries made it difficult to directly convey these concerns.

Tharoor added, "It is a clear signal that we are concerned about the well-being of minorities in Pakistan. Another difficulty is that there is no real dialogue going on between India and Pakistan. Otherwise, we could have conveyed our concerns directly and sought redressal." He also affirmed that Jaishankar's statement was "completely factual" and pointed out that the situation in Pakistan was extremely disturbing.

During the ongoing Budget

She elaborated, stating, "There are so many things about which I should not speak here. Internal and external affairs matters, I cannot disclose. I have some other opinions also. Because every country is facing challenges after COVID and in the turmoil situation in the world. If an economic war-like situation is going on in the world, how do we expect that we will gain? Let us hope for the gain, we can only hope. It is our dream that our country should do best. But it depends."

Her comments have drawn sharp criticism from the BJP, with party leaders accusing her of undermining India's economic progress. They have argued that the forecast of India becoming the world's largest economy by 2060 reflects the country's growing influence and success in overcoming global challenges.

Mamata Banerjee's remarks have sparked a fresh political debate, with the BJP accusing her of casting doubt on India's economic future while the country continues its upward trajectory in the global economy.



session, Jaishankar presented data in Parliament in response to a question on crimes and atrocities against minorities in Pakistan. He revealed that in the previous month, 10 cases of atrocities had been reported against the Hindu community, with three incidents involving the Sikh community, two concerning the Ahmadiyya community, and one involving the Christian community. Jaishankar stressed that these issues are raised at the international level, citing the country's record of human rights abuses and the systematic erosion of democratic values.

Jaishankar further pointed out that Pakistan's treatment of minorities, including the persecution and lack of protection, was a matter of concern and highlighted that such practices were part of state policies. India has consistently raised these concerns at the UNHRC, bringing attention to the violations.

Delhi Assembly to Dispose of 311 Pending Inquiries, Offers Relief to Bureaucrats



- **Speaker Gupta aims for a "clean slate" for new committees.**
- **Decision shifts focus from past cases to current governance.**
- **Step seen as reducing political influence in legislative processes.**

TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

In a significant move, the Delhi Legislative Assembly has decided to close all 311 pending inquiries, many of which had been initiated during the previous AAP regime. This decision, which is expected to bring relief to bureaucrats, was announced during the ongoing Budget session.

Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta explained that the purpose of this decision was to allow the committees of the 8th Legislative Assembly to begin with a "clean slate." He stressed the need to avoid getting entangled in cases that might appear to be politically motivated or unnecessary. "We need to consider whether it benefits the legislature or its committees to keep officers, some of whom have now retired,

under stress," Gupta added.

The inquiries, which had been initiated by various House Committees over the years, had become a point of contention, with many critics questioning the motives behind them. Gupta's statement suggests that this new approach is intended to move forward with a focus on current and pressing issues, rather than being bogged down by cases that no longer seem relevant.

The decision has been welcomed by several bureaucrats, who had been under pressure due to the prolonged investigations. With this move, the Delhi Assembly aims to restore efficiency and focus to the functioning of its committees. This step also signals a shift towards streamlining legislative processes, moving away from potentially politically charged investigations that could affect the morale of officers.

This development comes at a time when the Delhi Legislative Assembly is making efforts to set new priorities and ensure that governance and legislative activities are more effective and less influenced by past political dynamics.

ATM Stolen with Lakhs of Rupees in South East Delhi's Govindpuri Area

TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

A daring theft took place early Thursday morning in the Govindpuri area of South East Delhi, where a group of unidentified suspects stole an ATM containing lakhs of rupees. According to the Delhi Police, a PCR call was received at 5:50 AM, reporting the incident on Acharya Narender Dev Road.



When the police team arrived at the location, they found that the Kotak Mahindra Bank ATM had been forcefully removed from the small kiosk where it was installed. The suspects, whose identities are yet to be determined, had managed to steal the entire ATM machine, which contained a significant amount of cash.

The police have begun an investigation into the theft, collecting evidence from the scene and reviewing near-

by CCTV footage in hopes of identifying the culprits. It is unclear at this stage whether the thieves used any heavy machinery or other tools to move the ATM, and the exact amount of money stolen has not yet been confirmed.

Authorities have also initiated a forensic examination of the area, including analyzing the kiosk and nearby surroundings for any clues that might lead to the arrest of the

suspects. Police are also questioning local residents and businesses to gather more information that could help in tracking down the thieves.

This theft marks a significant security breach, with concerns raised over the vulnerability of ATMs in certain areas. Authorities are exploring all leads and are determined to bring those responsible for the crime to justice.

Delhi Police Heightens Security for Eid and Last Friday Prayers in East Delhi

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In preparation for the upcoming Eid celebrations and last Friday prayers, the Delhi Police have intensified security measures across east Delhi, with a particular focus on ensuring peace and law and order during the religious observances.

An official statement from the Delhi Police confirmed that teams have been meeting with local Aman Committees to discuss and review security plans for the events. These committees, which consist of community leaders, play a crucial role in ensuring peaceful celebrations.

"We have briefed all police station staff in the east district to maintain order and ensure

safety during the festivities," said the officer in charge. "Our staff will be present in large numbers for patrolling, and appropriate pickets will be set up to ensure smooth celebrations."

The police are committed to a strong, visible presence throughout the area, especially in sensitive spots, to prevent any potential disturbances and ensure that the prayers and festivities proceed without incident. Authorities have also appealed to the public to celebrate peacefully and cooperate with the security arrange-



ments in place.

Additionally, the police have assured the public that they are prepared for any unforeseen situations, taking a proactive approach in maintaining the safety of the citizens during the religious observances. Security personnel will be stationed at key locations, including mosques, markets, and other crowded areas, to manage crowds and prevent any untoward incidents.

With the heightened security measures, Delhi residents are hopeful for a peaceful and joyous Eid celebration, with all parties working together to create a safe environment for everyone. The police also expressed their commitment to supporting the public's safety during the festival and beyond.

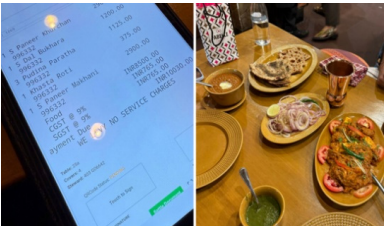
Delhi HC Upholds CCPA's Ban on Mandatory Service Charge in Hotels and Restaurants

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday upheld the Central Consumer Protection Authority's (CCPA) guidelines that prohibit hotels and restaurants from mandatorily levying a service charge on food bills. The court ruled that imposing a service charge in a compulsory manner violates consumer rights and constitutes unfair trade practices.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh, in her judgment, emphasized that service charges should be left to the discretion of the consumer rather than being automatically added to the bill. The ruling dismissed petitions filed by restaurant associations, including the Federation of Hotels and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) and the National Restaurant Association of India, which had challenged the guidelines.

The guidelines, first issued by the CCPA in July 2022, aimed to protect consumers from unfair trade practices and ensure transparency in pricing. The court found that collecting service charges under various names without consumer consent was detrimental to consumer rights and unfair to patrons. The guidelines were temporarily stayed by the court after their announcement but have now been reinstated.



The ruling strengthens consumer protection by ensuring that service charges are optional and not a mandatory

part of the food bill. Consumers are now entitled to refuse the charge if they deem it unnecessary, thereby promoting fairness and transparency in the hospitality industry.

In response to the judgment, the FHRAI had previously called for the delinking of Goods and Services Tax (GST) on food and beverage services from accommodation charges in hotels. This proposal, which the association presented on March 9, 2023, remains a point of contention in the industry, with hotel bodies continuing to push for changes to the current regulations.

The Delhi High Court's decision marks a significant step towards safeguarding consumer interests and ensuring businesses are held accountable for their pricing practices.

'This Is Delhi, Namaz Will Be Offered on Streets If Needed': AIMIM's Shoaib Jamai



TPN Correspondent| Delhi

As the holy month of Ramadan progresses, the controversy over offering Namaz on public streets continues to escalate. The latest to fuel the debate is Shoaib Jamai, the Delhi president of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM), who made provocative remarks in response to BJP leaders' criticism of Eid Namaz being held in public spaces.

In a video posted on 'X' (formerly Twitter), Jamai criticized BJP leaders for their opposition to offering Eid prayers on the streets, asserting that "this is Delhi; Delhi is for everyone." He further emphasized that if mosques have insufficient space, Namaz should be allowed in streets, Eidgah grounds, and even rooftops. Jamai also drew comparisons to other religious events, ques-

tioning why major roads are blocked for extended periods during Hindu festivals like the Kanwar Yatra and processions, yet Eid prayers, which last only 10-15 minutes, face opposition.

"The roads are blocked for bhandaras, so why can't Muslims be given a concession for Namaz?" Jamai asked, urging the police and administration to protect the freedom of religion and uphold the Constitution. His comments sparked further debate, with Samajwadi Party MP Iqra Hasan joining the conversation, stressing that Namaz only takes 10 minutes, and the ongoing opposition was fueled by hatred.

The controversy over offering Namaz on public roads began after several BJP leaders objected, citing concerns over traffic congestion and disrup-

tion to daily commuters. These leaders argued that religious gatherings should be held in designated places rather than public spaces. To address the issue, Meerut Police issued an order banning unauthorized roadside prayers before Eid, warning that violators could face legal consequences such as passport cancellations and license revocations.

In addition, Sambhal Sub-Divisional Magistrate Vandana Mishra stated that offering Namaz on the streets or using loudspeakers would not be allowed. Bihar Minister Neeraj Kumar Bablu also added that prayers should be conducted in designated areas such as graveyards if no space is available, reiterating that roads should be reserved for travel and not religious gatherings.

AIADMK Legislators Evicted from Tamil Nadu Assembly After Sloganeering Over Zero Hour Issue



- EPS denied permission to speak.
- Speaker cites lack of prior notice.
- Protests disrupt Deputy CM's speech.
- CM Stalin defends Assembly rules.

TPN Correspondent | CHENNAI

AIADMK legislators were evicted from the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on Friday (March 28, 2025) following a confrontation with Speaker M. Appavu over the refusal to allow Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K. Palaniswami to raise a matter of “urgent public importance” during the Zero Hour.

After the Question Hour concluded, Palaniswami stood up to request the opportunity to bring up a critical issue, but Speaker Appavu denied him permission. The Speaker explained that Palaniswami had

not submitted prior notice to raise the matter, as per the rules.

In response, AIADMK legislators began raising slogans demanding that the Opposition leader be allowed to speak. Their protest continued even when Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin stood up to reply to the Demands for Grants of the Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Department.

Water Resources Minister and Leader of the House, Duraimurugan, intervened, stressing that permitting the Opposition leader to speak without prior notice would set a bad

precedent in the Assembly. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin also weighed in, stating that the Opposition must adhere to the Assembly's rules and conventions if they wished to raise issues during the session.

Despite these statements, the AIADMK lawmakers continued their protests. Eventually, Speaker Appavu ordered their eviction for disturbing the proceedings of the House.

After the eviction, Chief Minister Stalin accused the Opposition of being unable to accept the growth of the state, particularly in areas like employment generation and investment attraction, under the leadership of the DMK government. He claimed that the protests reflected the Opposition's discomfort with the state's progress under the current administration.

Mild Tremors Felt in Kolkata and Imphal Following Powerful Earthquake in Bangkok

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

Mild tremors were experienced in Kolkata and Imphal on Friday after a powerful 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck near Bangkok, Thailand. According to official reports, no damage to property or loss of life was reported in Kolkata due to the tremor, though residents of the city felt the shaking. The tremors were also felt in adjoining areas, causing brief moments of alarm.

In Manipur, the tremors led to panic, especially in the Thangal Bazar area of Imphal, where several older multi-storey buildings are located. Despite the anxiety among residents, no structural damage or injuries were reported. The police in the region confirmed that the tremors were felt across the city but noted that the situation was under control.

In addition to the tremors in Kolkata and Imphal, another small earthquake of magnitude 2.5 struck Ukhrul district in Manipur at 1:07 PM. Authorities in the region did not report any significant effects from this minor quake.

A light-intensity earthquake also rattled Meghalaya's East Garo Hills district at 1:03 PM, about an hour after the Bangkok quake. The Regional Seismological Centre in Shillong confirmed the seismic event, but no damage or injuries were reported



there either.

The epicenter of the 7.7-magnitude earthquake was located in central Myanmar, around 50 kilometers east of Monywa. The quake caused significant damage in Bangkok, where a high-rise building under construction collapsed. A dramatic video circulating on social media captured the collapse of the building, with dust rising into the air as onlookers screamed and fled the scene. Authorities in Bangkok were responding to the incident, though information about casualties or the number of workers present at the site remains unavailable.

As authorities continue to assess the impact of the earthquake, the disaster management authority in the affected regions has reported no major injuries or fatalities.

Detained Punjab farmer leaders Pandher, Kohar released



TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh

Farmer leaders Sarwan Singh Pandher, Abhimanyu Kohar, and Kaka Singh Kotra, who were detained during a police crackdown following a meeting with a central delegation, were released on Friday, March 28, 2025.

Pandher, a leader of the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, was freed from Muktsar Jail, while Kohar, Kotra, and other farmer leaders were released from Patiala Cen-

tral Jail. The release came after a significant crackdown by the Punjab Police on March 19, which followed a meeting between farmer leaders and Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Chandigarh.

In a video message, Pandher condemned the Punjab Police's actions against the protesting farmers who had been camped at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points for over a year. Their primary demand remains a legal guarantee for a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops. Pandher criticized the government's decision to remove protestors and dismantle temporary structures set up at the border points.

The clash began when farmer leaders were detained while returning from the meeting, which aimed to address their ongoing demands. As they entered Mohali, they encountered heavy barricading,

leading to their detention. This move was met with widespread condemnation from protesting farmers, who felt the government was disregarding their concerns.

The police action also involved evicting farmers and reopening major highways, including the Shambhu-Ambala and Sangrur-Jind routes, that had been blocked as part of the farmers' protest. These measures have deepened the divide between farmer groups and the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, with protestors accusing both the AAP and BJP of favoring corporate interests over the welfare of farmers.

Despite the crackdown, the farmer leaders, still determined, have vowed to continue their struggle for the MSP guarantee and other demands. The situation remains tense, with protests likely to persist across the region as farmers refuse to back down.

Actor Prabhu moves Madras HC

To lift attachment of late father Sivaji Ganesan's bungalow



TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Actor G. Prabhu, the younger son of legendary thespian 'Sivaji' Ganesan, has filed an application before the Madras High Court requesting the lifting of an order that attached part of his family property, a bungalow named 'Annai Illam' in T. Nagar, Chennai. The attachment order was issued on February 10, 2025, in connection with a financial dispute involving his elder brother, G. Ramkumar, and the latter's son, R.G. Dushshyanth.

Prabhu's plea, which is scheduled for hearing on April 3, 2025, is expected to be represented by senior counsel P.R. Raman, assisted by advocate Sandesh Saravanan. The actor asserts that he is the sole owner of the property following a mutual agreement with his siblings. He claims the attachment order is unjustified, as his elder brother, Ramkumar, has no stake in the property.

The property dispute arose during a case involving a finance company, which claimed that Ramkumar had a one-fourth share in the bun-

galow. However, Prabhu clarified in his application that the bungalow was purchased by his father, Sivaji Ganesan, in 1959. Following the actor's death in 2001, Ganesan's unregistered will from 1999 specifically bequeathed the property to G. Prabhu.

After the passing of Prabhu's mother, Kamala Ganesan, in 2007, disputes surfaced among the family over the division of properties, leading to a partition suit filed by his sisters in 2021. However, a joint compromise memorandum was signed by the siblings in November 2023, granting Prabhu ownership of 'Annai Illam.' As part of the agreement, Prabhu and his brother paid ₹25 lakh each to their sisters, fulfilling the obligations by April 2024.

Prabhu argues that since the release deed was executed in his favor in July 2024, making him the absolute owner of the property, the attachment order should be lifted. He also requested the court to communicate the change to the Sub Registrar to update the property's encumbrance certificate accordingly.

Three Nepalese Killed, Four Injured in SUV Accident in UP's Balrampur

TPN Correspondent | Balrampur (UP)

Balrampur (UP), March 28, 2025: A tragic road accident in Balrampur has claimed the lives of three Nepalese citizens and left four others critically injured. The accident occurred late Thursday evening when an SUV, en route to Varanasi, overturned while attempting to avoid a cyclist. The incident took place in the Jarwa police station area of Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh.

According to local authorities, the vehicle, carrying a total of 10 people, including the driver, was traveling from Dang district in Nepal. The driver reportedly lost control of the SUV while trying to avoid a cyclist near Nagai Basaidih village. The vehicle veered off the road and flipped over, resulting in the immediate death of 70-year-old Praveer Khatri.

In addition to Khatri's death, two other passengers—Yuvraj, aged 38, and Dhanbali, aged 80—succumbed to

their injuries while receiving treatment at a nearby hospital. Four other passengers sustained serious injuries and are in critical condition. They



have been rushed to Bahraich District Hospital for urgent medical care.

Tulsipur Circle Officer Brij Nandan Rai confirmed the details of the accident and stated that the injured are currently under medical supervision. The police have taken the necessary steps, including sending the bodies for post-mortem and launching an investigation into the cause of the accident.

Local authorities are working to gath-

er more information regarding the incident, including the condition of the cyclist involved, who is believed to have been the catalyst for the driver's attempt to swerve and avoid a collision.

This tragic incident has shocked both the local community and the Nepalese citizens involved, with many expressing their condolences for the victims. The authorities have promised a thorough investigation to ensure justice is served.

From Asking for Urdu Preference to Mocking Telugu



TPN | G Avinash

Hyderabad, March 29: The hypocrisy of AIMIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi is once again on full display. Known for his provocative speeches and controversial remarks, Owaisi has now turned to mocking Telangana Minister Seethakka for speaking in her mother tongue, Telugu. His recent comments questioning her lack of Urdu and English proficiency show not only his arrogance but also his disregard for the very state he operates in.

For decades, Owaisi and his party have demanded preferential treatment for Urdu, lobbying successive governments to accommodate their language preferences. Yet, despite his family's long political presence in Hyderabad, Owaisi himself has failed to embrace Telugu—the language of the land. His inability (or refusal) to learn Telugu, while expecting others to conform to his linguistic preferences, exposes his political opportunism.

There is nothing wrong with Seethakka speaking in Telugu. As an elected leader in Telangana, she naturally communicates in her native language. The real question is—why hasn't Owaisi bothered to learn Telugu despite being in Hyderabad for generations? The answer is clear: political appeasement by successive governments has allowed him to continue with his Urdu-centric approach without any accountability.

This is not the first time Owaisi has stirred controversy with his statements. His past speeches have been infamous for their communal undertones and inflammatory rhetoric. Time and again, he has played divisive politics, using religion and language as tools to polarize the electorate. His latest jibe at a Telugu-speaking minister further cements his double standards—demanding Urdu preference on one hand while mocking those who speak Telugu in a Telugu-speaking state.

If Owaisi truly believes in representing Telangana, he should have learned Telugu by now. His deliberate ignorance of the state's language, coupled with his mockery of those who embrace it, speaks volumes about his priorities. Leaders like him, who thrive on divisive politics, should be questioned for their hypocrisy rather than entertained with continued political indulgence.

India’s \$2.7 Billion Electronics Boost

A Step Towards Self-Reliance or a Long Road Ahead?

THE POINT DESK

The Indian government's latest approval of a \$2.7 billion (₹22,919 crore) incentive plan to boost local manufacturing of electronic components marks another ambitious step toward self-reliance in the tech sector. With a vision to attract \$7 billion in investments and create over 91,600 jobs in six years, this move is part of India's broader goal of establishing a \$500 billion electronics economy by 2030. While the plan has been welcomed by industry leaders, the real challenge lies in its execution and ensuring that India can move beyond assembly to high-value manufacturing.

Breaking Dependency

For years, India has remained dependent on imports for key electronic components such as semiconductor chips, display modules, and lithium-ion battery cells. While the country has made significant progress in assembling smartphones and electronic gadgets, the lack of a strong component ecosystem has limited value addition within the domestic market.

Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw acknowledged this gap, stating that India has achieved only 20% value addition in electronics manufacturing over the past decade. The new scheme, aimed at manufacturing both active and passive components, is expected to double this value in the next five years. The government's push aligns with its broader semiconductor mission, which aims to strengthen local production of high-end electronic components.

Key Features of the Incentive Plan

The scheme will provide subsidies of up to 50% for domestic and foreign companies setting up local component manufacturing facilities. The primary focus areas include:

- **Sub-assembly of display and camera modules**
- **Printed circuit boards (PCBs)**
- **Lithium-ion battery cells**
- **Enclosures for mobile and electronics hardware**

Additionally, incentives will also cover the localization of capital goods and other components used in the manufacturing process. However, a senior government official clarified that the



support for these will be below 50% of the company's capital expenditure. The government is also working on reforms in labor laws, customs policies, and taxation to create a more conducive environment for electronic manufacturers.

A Positive Move for Growth

Industry leaders have responded positively to the initiative. Josh Foulger, president of electronics at Zetwerk, emphasized the importance of building a strong component ecosystem in India, stating that his company is actively seeking partnerships to contribute to this effort.

Ajai Chowdhry, co-founder of HCL Technologies and chairman of Epic Foundation, noted that this move will enable "higher value addition in the country" and attract more investment in system products. He also highlighted the need for a "Design in India" scheme for chips and systems, which would further strengthen India's position in the global electronics industry.

Can India Compete with China and Taiwan?

While the approval of this incentive plan is a significant move, it is only the first step in a long journey. China and Taiwan dominate the global electronics supply chain, having spent decades developing their manufacturing ecosystems. Simply offering incentives may not be enough to attract global players unless India can provide a seamless and competitive environment.

Some key challenges that India will need to address include:

- **High Cost of Production – De-**

spite incentives, manufacturing costs in India remain higher than in China due to infrastructure gaps and expensive logistics.

- **Lack of Skilled Workforce – The electronics sector requires highly specialized skills, and India will need a focused strategy to train and develop a skilled workforce.**
- **Delayed Implementation of Previous Schemes – India's first semiconductor incentive scheme saw multiple delays, raising concerns about how efficiently the new scheme will be executed.**
- **Uncertain Global Demand – The global electronics market is facing fluctuations, and India must ensure steady demand to sustain long-term investment in the sector.**

Will This Move Help India Achieve Self-Sufficiency?

The government's larger vision of a \$500 billion electronics economy by 2030 depends on how well India can implement its incentive schemes and attract major investments. The country already manufactures \$120 billion worth of electronics, but to scale up, it will require a strong policy framework, industry collaboration, and consistent government support.

If implemented effectively, this initiative could position India as a key player in the global electronics supply chain, reducing dependency on imports and creating a robust domestic manufacturing ecosystem. However, it will take sustained efforts and strong execution to turn this vision into reality.

Is US-Canada Friendship Damaged Beyond Repair?

THE POINT DESK

The long-standing partnership between the United States and Canada is facing an unprecedented crisis. With US President Donald Trump's recent decision to impose a 25% tariff on imported vehicles and auto parts, tensions have escalated between the two North American allies. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's response has made it clear: the "old relationship" with the US is over. As economic and military ties between the two nations deteriorate, a critical question arises—has the US-Canada relationship been damaged beyond repair?

Trump's Trade War Sparks Outrage

On March 27, President Trump announced steep tariffs on imported automobiles and parts, set to take effect from April 3, 2025. The move has sparked outrage among key US trading partners, including Canada, Germany, the European Union, and Japan, all of whom are now considering retaliatory measures.

Trump has even warned that if the EU and Canada cooperate in opposing these tariffs, the US could impose "far larger" economic actions against them.

For Canada, this is not just another trade dispute. The auto industry is a critical part of the Canadian economy, employing thousands of workers. By imposing tariffs, Trump has directly challenged Canada's economic stability.



In response, PM Mark Carney called the tariffs a "direct attack" on Canadian workers and pledged immediate retaliation through trade measures designed to hurt the US while minimizing damage to Canada.

Mark Carney Declares the 'Old Relationship' is Over

In a sharp departure from the usual diplomatic tone between Canada and the US, PM Mark Carney did not hold back in his criticism of the Trump administration. His statement—"It is clear that the United States is no longer a reliable partner"—marked a turning point in how Canada views its long-time ally.

Carney made it clear that Canada could no longer depend on the US as it once

did. He emphasized the need to "dramatically reduce reliance on the United States" and seek new trade relationships. This marks a significant shift from Canada's traditional approach, which has long been rooted in deep economic and security cooperation with its southern neighbor.

Carney also took issue with Trump's past rhetoric about Canada. During his 2024 re-election campaign, Trump repeatedly referred to then-PM Justin Trudeau as "Governor Trudeau" and even entertained speculation about annexing Canada as the "51st state" of the US. Such remarks were dismissed as campaign rhetoric at the time, but in light of the tariff war and diplomatic tensions, they have taken on a more serious tone.

Is the US-Canada Relationship Truly Beyond Repair?

While Mark Carney has declared that there is "no turning back," he has not entirely ruled out restoring some level of trust with the US. However, he made it clear that any future partnership would be vastly different from the past. The days of deep economic integration and unquestioned military cooperation between the two countries appear to be over.

Carney also emphasized that his government will fight back with "retaliatory trade actions of our own that will have maximum impact in the United States and minimum impacts here in Canada." This signals a more aggressive stance than previous Canadian administrations, which have often sought to negotiate rather than retaliate against US trade actions.

How Americans View Canada Amid Rising Tensions

The strained relationship between the two nations is also reflected in shifting public opinion. According to a recent Associated Press-NORC poll conducted between March 20-24, 2025, fewer Americans now see Canada as a close ally compared to previous years.

Before Trump's second term, 70% of Democrats viewed Canada as a close ally. Now, that number has dropped to just 50%. Across all political groups, only 50% of Americans still consider Canada

a close ally, compared to 60% in 2023. Instead, three in 10 respondents now view Canada as merely "friendly but not a close ally," while two in 10 describe the relationship as "not friendly but not enemies."

These shifts highlight a significant deterioration in the US-Canada friendship. While most Americans do not see Canada as an outright adversary, the perception of the once-strong alliance is weakening.

What's Next for US-Canada Relations?

The coming months will be crucial in determining the future of US-Canada relations. Mark Carney has vowed to hold direct talks with President Trump in an attempt to address the crisis. However, given Trump's hardline stance on trade and national interests, it remains unclear whether diplomacy will be enough to mend the fractured relationship.

If Canada moves forward with its plans to pivot trade relationships away from the US, the long-term consequences could be profound. A weakened North American trade bloc could give economic competitors like China and the EU an advantage.

For now, what is certain is that the trust between the US and Canada has been severely damaged. Whether it can be fully restored—or whether this marks the beginning of a permanent separation—remains to be seen.

India Ready to Assist Myanmar & Thailand After Devastating Earthquake

- India offers assistance to Myanmar & Thailand
- PM Modi expresses deep concern
- 7.7 magnitude earthquake strikes Myanmar
- Tremors felt in Indian cities
- Skyscraper collapses, workers trapped

India has extended its support to Myanmar and Thailand following a powerful earthquake that struck both countries, leaving dozens dead and causing severe destruction. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed deep concern over the situation and assured that India is ready to provide all possible assistance to the affected nations. Taking to social media platform X (formerly Twitter), PM Modi conveyed his sympathies and pledged India's support in the aftermath of the disaster. "Concerned by the situation in the wake of the earthquake in Myanmar and Thailand. Praying for the safety and well-being of everyone. India stands ready to offer all possible assistance. In this regard, I have asked our authorities to be on standby. Also asked the MEA to remain in touch with the Governments of Myanmar and Thailand," he posted.



The earthquake, measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale, struck central Myanmar at approximately 12:50 PM local time on Friday. The epicenter was located 16 kilometers northwest of Sagaing at a depth of 10 kilometers, according to the United States Geological

Survey (USGS). The quake was followed by a significant aftershock of 6.8 magnitude. The tremors were strong enough to be felt in various parts of India, including Kolkata and Imphal, triggering concerns among residents. While reports of casualties continue to emerge, no tsunami warning has

been issued so far. Rescue and relief operations are currently underway in the affected regions as authorities assess the full extent of the damage. One of the most shocking visuals from the disaster was a viral video showing an under-construction skyscraper in Bangkok's Chatuchak neighborhood collapsing due to the tremors. Reports indicate that at least 43 workers are trapped under the debris, with rescue teams racing against time to locate survivors. India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has been directed to stay in close contact with both Myanmar and Thailand to coordinate relief efforts. Indian disaster response teams and humanitarian aid are expected to be mobilized as needed to assist in rescue and recovery operations. The earthquake serves as a grim reminder of the region's vulnerability to seismic activity. As affected communities grapple with the devastation, international support and swift response efforts remain crucial in mitigating the crisis. India's proactive stance underscores its commitment to aiding its neighbors in times of need.



"Jaishankar Slams Pakistan for Minority Persecution"

- India tracks minority treatment closely.
- Jaishankar highlights Pakistan's human rights abuses.
- February saw multiple Hindu persecution cases.
- Sikh community also faced threats.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar addressed the Lok Sabha on Friday, highlighting the "crimes and atrocities against minorities" in Pakistan. He emphasized that India closely monitors the treatment of minorities in the neighboring country and consistently raises concerns on international platforms, including the United Nations. Jaishankar reaffirmed India's stance at the UN, where Pakistan has been criticized for its human rights violations and persecution of minorities. He stated that India remains vigilant and continues to bring attention to these issues at global forums. Citing specific incidents, the minister detailed several cases of atrocities that took place in February. "We follow very closely and track the treatment of minorities in Pakistan. In February alone, there were ten cases of atrocities against the Hindu community—seven involving abduction and forced conversion, two related to abduction, and one incident where police took action against students celebrating Holi," Jaishankar informed the Parliament. The minister also highlighted attacks against the Sikh community in Pakistan. "There were three incidents related to the Sikh community. In one case, a Sikh family was attacked. In another, a Sikh family was threatened over the reopening of an old Gurudwara. Additionally, there was an abduction and forced conversion case involving a Sikh girl," he said. Jaishankar's remarks reinforced India's commitment to advocating for the rights of persecuted minorities in Pakistan. He stressed that India would continue to raise these concerns at the highest levels to ensure that such human rights violations do not go unnoticed. The minister's statement comes amid ongoing diplomatic tensions between the two nations, with India frequently calling out Pakistan on international platforms for its record on minority rights and religious freedom. As global attention remains on human rights, Jaishankar's address in Parliament signals India's firm stance on holding Pakistan accountable for its treatment of religious minorities. India's consistent efforts to highlight these issues at the UN and other international bodies underscore its commitment to protecting human rights and ensuring that the concerns of persecuted communities are addressed on the global stage.

Electoral Battle in 2026 Tamil Nadu Elections Will Be Between TVK and DMK

Tamilaga Vетtri Kazhagam (TVK) president and actor Vijay has declared that the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections will be a direct contest between his party and the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). Speaking at TVK's first general council meeting at Thiruvanniyur in Chennai on Friday, Vijay expressed confidence in his party's ability to emerge as a strong political force in the State. Vijay alleged that the ruling DMK government has been creating obstacles for TVK over the past year, making it difficult to organize conferences, meetings, and outreach programs. He claimed that such disruptions were deliberate attempts to hinder TVK's growth and prevent it from reaching the masses. Despite these challenges, he assured his supporters that his party remained committed to its mission and would not succumb to political pressure. Addressing thousands of party members gathered at the event, Vijay reiterated that TVK represents a new era of politics in Tamil Nadu. He



positioned the party as a viable alternative to traditional political forces, stating that the people of the State are looking for change. Vijay emphasized that TVK is not centered around any one individual but is a collective movement driven by the aspirations of the people. He urged party workers to stay united and work tirelessly at the grassroots level to strengthen

TVK's presence across Tamil Nadu. Highlighting the party's focus on governance, development, and welfare, Vijay assured that if TVK is elected to power, his government would prioritize key issues such as education, employment, social justice, and economic growth. He also dismissed claims that TVK was a temporary political experiment, stating that

it was founded on principles of transparency, equality, and justice. Concluding his speech, Vijay called upon the people of Tamil Nadu to support TVK in its political journey. He asserted that the 2026 elections would mark the beginning of a new chapter in the State's politics, with TVK leading the way towards a progressive and inclusive future.

J&K Seeks Extension for Special Cells



The Jammu and Kashmir government has urged the National Commission for Women (NCW) to extend funding for its special cells supporting domestic violence victims for at least another year. These special cells, established in police stations across J&K under the initiative Violence-Free Home – A Woman's Right, were launched in 2021 to provide crucial psycho-social-legal support to women facing domestic violence. The initiative is a joint effort involving the NCW, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, the J&K Police, and the Social Welfare Department. However, the project was initially set up for a limited period, with funding scheduled to end on March 31, 2025, unless an extension is granted. The J&K Social Welfare Minister, Sakina

Itoo, confirmed that the government has formally requested NCW to extend the project, emphasizing the positive impact these cells have had on women's well-being. "We have written to NCW, requesting them to extend the project by one more year as it would further improve the condition of women. However, even if the project is discontinued, the UT has staff centers operating in every district, which will continue to provide support," said Itoo. Since its establishment in 2021, the initiative has assisted nearly 10,000 women, with each special cell comprising two trained social workers to provide necessary guidance and intervention. The cells have been instrumental in offering women a safe space to seek help against domestic abuse and legal guidance to navigate their challenges. Despite the government's plea, sources within NCW claim that the J&K administration has been reluctant to take over the cells, even though they were aware that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was valid only until March 31. The original plan was for NCW to initiate and support the project before the J&K government assumed responsibility.

Centre Approves 2% Hike in Dearness Allowance for Government Employees

The Union Cabinet has approved a 2% increase in the dearness allowance (DA) for central government employees, bringing it up from 53% to 55% of basic pay. This move aims to provide relief against inflation and comes ahead of the 8th Pay Commission's implementation. In the last revision, DA was raised by 3% in October 2024, increasing it to 53% of basic pay. The new hike will further enhance government employees' salaries, helping them manage rising costs. DA is a critical component of salary adjustments for government staff, designed to counteract the impact of inflation. The Centre approved the 8th Pay Commission in January 2025 to revise wages and allowances for central government employees. The commission's formal constitution, including the appointment of a chairman and at least two members, is expected soon. While



DA and Dearness Relief (DR) are revised biannually, this is likely the final revision before the commission starts consultations with various stakeholders. Employee forums have advocated merging DA and DR with the basic salary before the next Pay Commission report is implemented. Historically, the 5th Pay Commission man-

dated merging DA with basic pay once it exceeded 50%. However, while the government integrated DA with basic pay in 2004, this practice was discontinued under the 6th and 7th Pay Commissions. The 8th Pay Commission is expected to introduce significant changes in salary structures, benefits, and allowances for government employees. The latest DA hike ensures financial relief for employees while they await broader salary reforms under the new pay commission. The upcoming deliberations will determine how future revisions and pay structures are formulated to benefit employees. With the rising cost of living, these adjustments play a vital role in maintaining the financial well-being of government workers. The DA increase reflects the government's commitment to supporting its employees in managing economic challenges effectively.

Trump Hosts Iftar Dinner At White House, Thanks Muslims For Support



TPN Correspondent | New York

US President Donald Trump hosted the annual Iftar dinner at the White House on Thursday, marking a significant moment during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. In his remarks, Trump emphasized his administration's ongoing commitment to the Muslim community and its efforts to foster peace in the Middle East.

During the event, attended by Muslim leaders, diplomats, and government officials, Trump began by extending a warm "Ramadan Mubarak" to Muslim attendees. He expressed gratitude to the Muslim-American community for their support in the 2024 presidential election, saying, "The Muslim community was there for us in November — and while I'm president, I'm going to be there for you."

Trump went on to highlight the administration's diplomatic efforts, particularly in relation to the Middle East, underscoring the importance of the Abraham Accords. These agreements, which were brokered during his presidency, aimed at normalizing relations between Israel and several Arab nations. "My administration is engaged in relentless diplomacy to forge a lasting peace in the Middle East, building on the historic Abraham Accords," Trump said, adding that while the agreements had been signed, his administration would work to "fill them out" and continue building on their success. He criticized the Biden administration, claiming that little had been done to further the agreements.

Trump also remarked on the ongoing conflict in Gaza, where violence continues between Israel and Hamas. He expressed a desire for peace for all nations and reiterated the sacred nature of Ramadan for Muslims, who fast and pray during the month. In a final reflection, Trump reaffirmed the importance of peace and cooperation, stressing that his administration remains committed to fulfilling its promises to the Muslim community, both in the US and abroad. The Iftar dinner at the White House has become an annual tradition for Trump, having first hosted such an event in 2018.

China's Door Will 'Open Wider And Wider', Xi Tells Foreign Executives



TPN Correspondent | Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping reaffirmed China's commitment to opening its doors wider to foreign businesses, emphasizing that the country is focused on advancing reform and economic openness. Speaking at a meeting with international executives in Beijing, including hedge fund tycoon Ray Dalio and Samsung Electronics chief Lee Jae-yong, Xi assured attendees that China would continue to push forward with its economic opening. "China is firmly committed to advancing reform and opening up. The door of opening up will only open wider and wider," Xi told the group of executives. His remarks come as China seeks to bolster foreign investments amid growing tensions with the United States, which has imposed significant tariffs on Chinese goods as part of an ongoing trade war.

Xi highlighted the country's focus on "high-quality development" while accelerating green, digital, and intelligent transformations. He emphasized China's strong industrial support capacity, which he believes will benefit foreign enterprises looking to tap into the growing Chinese market. "Foreign enterprises in China can develop their advantages and capabilities and gain an advantage in global competition," Xi said, signaling that China is open to foreign investment and innovation in sectors like technology and manufacturing.

PM Modi to Attend BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok, Followed by Sri Lanka Visit



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the 6th BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) summit in Bangkok on April 3-4, 2025, as announced by the Ministry of Exter-

- **Key focus on security, trade, investment, and connectivity.**
- **PM to visit Sri Lanka from April 4-6 for bilateral talks.**
- **Visit aligns with India's 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies.**

nal Affairs on Friday. This summit will be the first in-person meeting of BIMSTEC leaders post-pandemic and the first since the military coup in Myanmar on February 1, 2021, which has plunged the country into internal conflict.

The summit, hosted by Thailand, will see Prime Minister Modi's third visit to the country. BIMSTEC, comprising India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, and Bhutan, is expected to discuss strategies to enhance cooperation in sectors like security, trade, investment, and connectivity. Discussions will also focus on institutional and capacity-building measures to strengthen regional collaboration within the BIMSTEC framework.

Following the Bangkok summit, PM Modi will travel to Sri Lanka for a state visit from April 4 to 6. During his visit, he will meet with top Sri Lankan leadership, including President Anura Kumara Disanayaka, to review the progress made in areas of bilateral cooperation outlined in the joint vision for fostering

partnerships between the two nations.

The Prime Minister's visit to Thailand and Sri Lanka highlights India's commitment to its 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies, along with the newly introduced 'MAHASAGAR' vision—Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions. This vision aims to strengthen India's ties with the Global South, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

PM Modi's agenda also includes a meeting with Thai Prime Minister on April 3 to discuss strengthening the partnership between India and Thailand, two maritime neighbors with shared cultural, linguistic, and religious ties. Additionally, during his Sri Lanka visit, the Prime Minister will inaugurate development projects funded by India in Anuradhapura, further reinforcing bilateral cooperation.

The tour underscores India's dedication to regional cooperation and its leadership role in fostering peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

7.7 Magnitude Earthquake Strikes Myanmar, Tremors Felt Across Southeast Asia

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A powerful 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck near the city of Sagaing, Myanmar, on Friday afternoon, causing widespread devastation and leaving at least 20 people dead, including 10 who died when a mosque collapsed in Mandalay during prayers. The earthquake's epicenter was approximately 260km from the capital Naypyidaw, where a 1000-bed hospital is feared to be a "mass casualty area," according to AFP. Though the number of fatalities at the hospital remains unconfirmed, scenes outside the building showed injured individuals receiving treatment on the streets, with family members offering comfort.

The quake also caused significant damage in other parts of Myanmar, including the destruction of residential buildings in Mandalay, the collapse of an old bridge over the Irrawaddy River, and the demolition of a monastery near the Thai border. In Mandalay, tremors led to further casualties, and reports suggest that more people may be trapped under the rubble.

The tremors were felt as far as northern Thailand, where buildings swayed, and metro services in Bangkok were temporarily suspended. Videos posted on social me-



dia showed people fleeing buildings in panic, and Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra declared a state of emergency in the capital. Additionally, in Bangkok's Chatuchak district, a 30-floor under-construction building collapsed, trapping 43 people. The building, intended for government offices, was reduced to rubble, and two deaths have been reported so far.

China's Yunnan province also felt the tremors, with the China Earthquake Networks

Center reporting a magnitude of 7.9. Mild tremors were also recorded in Kolkata, parts of Manipur, and Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Residents of Chiang Mai in Thailand recounted their experiences, with one person saying they had to flee their home in their pyjamas as the earthquake shook the city. The extensive damage and aftershocks have left authorities in Southeast Asia scrambling to assess the full extent of the destruction.

Bangladesh Welcomes Chinese Participation in Teesta River Project Signs Agreements During Yunus' China Visit

TPN Correspondent | NEW DELHI

Bangladesh has welcomed China's participation in the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project, marking a significant step in their growing bilateral relations. This development was announced during the ongoing visit of Chief Advisor Prof. Mohammed Yunus to China. The two countries also signed an agreement for the exchange of hydrological data on the Yarlung Zangbo-Jamuna (Brahmaputra) river, as part of a broader push to strengthen cooperation in various sectors.

In a joint statement issued at the end of the official discussions, both nations agreed to begin discussions for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) "at an early date," aiming to further bolster economic ties. The statement highlighted the commitment to promoting high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, fostering international collaboration on industrial and supply chains, and working toward modernization in both countries.

The two sides also reaffirmed their support for each other's core issues, with Bangla-



desh reiterating its support for China's "One China Policy," underscoring its position that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. Prof. Yunus, who also participated in the Boao Forum annual meeting in Hainan, met President Xi Jinping in Beijing and held high-level discussions with Chinese traders

and investors.

Additionally, Bangladesh expressed appreciation for China's efforts in facilitating medical treatment for Bangladeshi citizens in the Yunnan province, reflecting the deepening people-to-people ties between the two nations.

On the economic front, Bangladesh welcomed Chinese companies to invest in the Mongla Port Facilities Modernisation and Expansion Project and confirmed its interest in further developing the Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone (CEIZ) in Chittagong. Both countries agreed to continue discussions on optimizing the China-Bangladesh Investment Agreement.

Looking to the future, the two countries resolved to deepen exchanges in culture, tourism, media, education, healthcare, and youth initiatives, marking the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Both sides also agreed to intensify cooperation in the blue economy and maritime sectors, including the establishment of a new round of Dialogue on Maritime Cooperation at an appropriate time.

Markets End in Red Amid Volatility; Nifty & Sensex Face Resistance

Domestic stock markets were in a tight spot today. They ended with moderate losses on Friday. They tested the patience of investors by rising and falling for a while. The indices, which started flat in the morning, reached their lows due to mixed signals from Trump tariffs, the US economy, inflation data and global markets. They recovered slightly in the afternoon and returned to their initial levels. European markets collapsed as soon as they opened. Nifty faced resistance at 23,600 and Sensex at 77,600 twice. FMCG, finance and bank shares gained.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 77,606 in the previous session, opened at 77,690 on Friday. It touched an intraday low at 77,185. It reached an intraday high at 77,766. It ended at 77,414, down 191 points. The NSE Nifty, which



opened at 23,600, touched a low of 23,450 and a high of 23,450. It closed

down 72 points at 23,519. The Nifty Bank fell 11 points to settle at 51,564.

In the Nifty50, 21 companies gained while 27 lost. FMCG and finance stocks gained. Media, IT, realty, auto, metal, pharma, commodities, PSU bank, consumption, health-care and energy stocks rose. Tata Consumer, Kotak Bank, Apollo Hospitals, ONGC and Tata Motors were the top gainers. Wipro, IndusInd, Shriram Finance, Cipla, M&M were the biggest losers.

Market breadth on NSE today completely shifted in favour of sellers. Out of 2976 stocks traded, 1807 lost. 1099 gained. 36 shares touched 52-week highs and 312 shares touched 52-week lows. The upper circuit reached 98 and the lower circuit reached 132.



Analysts expect the RBI to cut the repo rate by 25 basis points in the April monetary policy meeting. The Union Cabinet approved the manufacturing PLI scheme worth Rs 25,000 crore. The rupee strengthened by 32 paise to settle at 85.46 against the dollar today. KPI Green Engineering has received an order worth Rs 756 crore. IRCON gets letter of agreement from RVNL for Rs 872 crore project. HSBC gives buy rating to Glenmark Pharma with target price of Rs 1785. Goldman Sachs maintains buy rating on Reliance Industries at Rs 1640 crore. Asian Paints approves Rs 690 crore capital expenditure. SEBI approves Blackstone-backed Ask Group to start mutual fund business. Hudco is looking at raising Rs 65,000 crore through debt.

SBI's C S Setty Elected Chairman of Indian Banks' Association



C S Setty, the Chairman of State Bank of India (SBI), was elected as the new chairman of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) on Friday. Setty's appointment was confirmed during the managing committee meeting of the association, and he will hold the position until the next Annual General Meeting (AGM), according to an official statement.

Alongside Setty, several prominent bankers were elected as deputy chairmen of the association. These include A Manimekhalai, Managing Director and CEO of Union Bank of India, Swarup Kumar Saha, Managing Director and CEO of Punjab and Sind Bank, and Madhav Nair, Country Head and CEO of Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait in India. These leaders will play a crucial role in steer-

ing the association's strategic direction. In addition, B Ramesh Babu, Managing Director and CEO of private sector lender Karur Vyasya Bank, was appointed as the honorary secretary of the IBA. His role will involve managing the day-to-day operations of the association and supporting its initiatives.

The announcement comes shortly after the last AGM of the IBA, which was held earlier this month in Mumbai, the financial capital of India. The AGM was attended by M Nagaraju, the Secretary of the Department of Financial Services, underscoring the importance of the event in shaping the banking sector's future in India.

Setty's election as chairman marks a significant leadership change for the Indian Banks' Association, which represents major public and private sector banks. His extensive experience at SBI is expected to bring fresh perspectives and vision to the association. The appointment of new deputy chairmen and honorary secretary indicates the association's continued focus on strengthening leadership at the helm of India's banking industry.

This leadership transition will likely play a pivotal role in addressing key banking sector challenges and fostering collaboration among financial institutions in India.

Airtel Brings 2Africa Pearls Subsea Cable to India, Expanding Connectivity to Africa and Europe

Telecom giant Bharti Airtel has successfully brought the 2Africa Pearls subsea cable system to Indian shores, enhancing the country's connectivity with Africa, Europe, and West Asia. This strategic move marks a significant step in Airtel's ongoing efforts to expand and diversify its global network infrastructure.



The 2Africa Pearls cable is part of the larger 2Africa project, which, upon completion, will become the world's longest subsea cable system, stretching over 45,000 kilometers. This ambitious system will link Asia, Africa, and Europe through West Asia, providing robust international bandwidth and improving global connectivity.

According to Airtel, the 2Africa Pearls system will deliver over 100 terabits per second (tbps) of international

capacity to India. This boost in capacity will enhance the country's communication network, enabling faster and more reliable broadband services for users and businesses alike.

Sharat Sinha, Director and CEO of Airtel Business, expressed excitement about the new addition to Airtel's network, stating, "We are thrilled to bring the 2Africa Pearls cable to India, adding to our network resilience. We are aggressively

diversifying our global network and recently landed the SEA-WE-ME-6 cable in Chennai and Mumbai. We will continue investing in global cable systems to future-proof our network and deliver high uptime, reliability, and superior quality services to our customers."

Submarine cables are essential infrastructure that connect countries worldwide, facilitating broadband and communication services. With around 650 submarine cable systems globally, approximately 570 are operational, reflecting the crucial role these cables play in global connectivity.

This expansion is part of Airtel's broader strategy to strengthen its international network, ensuring high-quality services and enhanced connectivity between key global regions.

SEBI Proposes New Expiry Day Restrictions for Equity Derivatives Products



The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a significant change to the settlement schedule of equity derivatives products offered by stock exchanges. The regulatory body has suggested that the final settlement day or expiry day for these products be restricted to either Tuesday or Thursday. This proposal aims to provide greater predictability and stability for market participants regarding expiry days.

Currently, equity derivatives contracts such as futures and options

(F&O) have varying expiry days, which can often lead to uncertainties and market volatility. By limiting expiry days to just two specific days, SEBI intends to streamline the process, reducing the potential for market disruptions while enhancing transparency. This change will help market participants better plan their trading strategies, as they will know exactly when to expect the settlement of their derivative contracts.

The move follows concerns about the current system's complexity

and its impact on market liquidity. With multiple expiry dates across the week, traders and investors can sometimes face challenges in managing their portfolios and adjusting positions. A more standardized expiry schedule is expected to improve the efficiency of the equity derivatives market, making it easier for participants to engage in trading without the added uncertainty of fluctuating expiry days.

If implemented, this new restriction would bring Indian equity derivatives products in line with international markets, where more consistent expiry schedules are commonly followed. SEBI's initiative is also likely to enhance the attractiveness of Indian markets to foreign investors, offering a more predictable trading environment.

This proposal is currently under consultation, with SEBI seeking feedback from market participants and other stakeholders before finalizing the decision. If accepted, it could lead to significant changes in the way equity derivatives are traded in India, with potential benefits in terms of both market efficiency and participant confidence.

India's core sector growth slows to 2.9% in February

India's core infrastructure sectors, which contribute to about 40% of the country's industrial output, showed a slowdown in February 2025, growing by just 2.9%. This marks the slowest monthly growth in five months, compared to 7.1% growth in the same month the previous year.

The latest data, released by the Union commerce ministry on Friday, revealed that only three out of the eight core sectors experienced a rise in production, with cement and fertilizers standing out with higher output compared to the previous year. However, the overall output of these core sectors was weaker than the previous month, as five out of eight indicators, including coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery, and cement output, showed a decline.

In February, cement production grew by 10.5%, and fertilizers output rose by 10.2%, marking a positive year-on-year performance. However, cement production growth slowed down on a monthly basis. Coal output showed a modest rise of 1.7%, its slowest in six months, while refinery output increased by 0.8%. In contrast, the output of crude oil and

natural gas contracted by 5.2% and 6%, respectively. Steel production grew by 5.6%, and electricity output rose by 2.8%, both showing an improvement compared to January. On the other hand, the overall growth of the core sector has moderated, with a significant slowdown seen in coal, crude oil, and natural gas, which contributed to the decline.

This slowdown in core sector output comes as India's manufacturing sector also faced a dip, with manufacturing growth falling to a 14-month low in February, according to the HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI). The moderation in core sector growth is likely to impact the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), with predictions suggesting a dip to 3-3.5% growth for February 2025, down from 5% in January.

As per Aditi Nayar, chief economist at Icria Ltd., the slower growth was partly due to the high base effect of the leap year. Despite this, the sluggish performance in key sectors raises concerns about the sustainability of India's industrial momentum in the coming months.

YouTube Tests Notification Reduction System



Google has announced that YouTube is testing a new system designed to reduce notifications from subscribed channels that users no longer watch frequently. This experiment aims to strike a balance between keeping users informed and preventing unwanted alerts without requiring them to unsubscribe. Currently, YouTube users can set notifications to “All,” ensuring they receive updates from their favorite channels via push notifications. However, this can become frustrating when users continue receiving alerts from channels they no longer engage with. The only existing solution is to unsubscribe, which can be tedious if the user follows many channels. The new system aims to resolve this issue by automatically limiting notifications from infrequently watched channels. YouTube’s New Notification System According to Google, this system will ensure that users who haven’t interacted with a channel recently will stop receiving push notifications from it. However,

these notifications will still be available in the YouTube app’s notification inbox. This change does not impact channels that upload infrequently or those with which users actively engage. Rather than adjusting notification settings for each channel individually or disabling all notifications at the app level, this experiment provides a middle ground. By limiting unwanted alerts, YouTube aims to enhance the user experience without affecting creators’ reach significantly. However, since this feature is still in the testing phase, only a small group of users currently has access to it. In addition to this notification experiment, YouTube recently introduced another test concerning monetization. Earlier this month, the platform began automatically submitting videos with a “Limited or no ads” rating for an additional review. This process ensures that even newly uploaded private videos undergo a monetization assessment, which may take up to 24 hours.

UK Man Finds Forgotten Lottery Ticket, Wins Over ₹10 Crore



Darren Burfitt, a 44-year-old greenkeeper from Swansea, recently discovered he had won £1 million (over ₹11 crore) in the lottery after checking an old ticket that had been sitting in his car for four months. According to The Metro, Burfitt unknowingly held a winning ticket but had forgotten about it. He often stored his lottery tickets in the central console of his car for safekeeping but never got around to checking them. His unexpected windfall came when his four-year-old son asked for a snack. Instead of opening a new bag of crisps, Burfitt went to fetch an unfinished packet from the car. While doing so, he remembered the tickets and decided to

scan them using the National Lottery app. To his amazement, one of the tickets turned out to be a jackpot winner. He recalled hearing about a public appeal to find a missing lottery winner but never imagined it could be him. “When my son asked for a packet of crisps, I thought of the one in my car. I went out to get it and grabbed my National Lottery tickets at the same time. When I scanned them on the app, I was stunned,” Burfitt shared. This stroke of luck turned an ordinary moment into a life-changing one. While it remains unclear how he plans to use his winnings, the fortunate find has undoubtedly changed his future.

Google Introduces New AI-Powered Travel Planning Features

Google has announced the rollout of several new features across its platforms to simplify travel planning. These updates, some powered by AI, will enhance Google Search, Maps, and Lens, making it easier for users to organize vacations. One of the key upgrades is the introduction of AI Overviews in Google Search, which will now provide trip ideas for cities, regions, and countries. Users can search for customized itineraries, such as “create an itinerary for Costa Rica with a focus on nature,” and receive AI-generated recommendations, photos, and user reviews. An expandable map feature will help users visualize their destinations, and trip details can be exported via Google Docs, Gmail, or saved in Maps. This feature is currently available in English in the US on mobile and desktop.

Google Maps is also receiving an upgrade that allows users to identify locations from screenshots stored on their devices. By adding these images to Maps, Gemini AI will recognize the places and highlight them on the map, enabling users to plan routes or explore nearby attractions. This update is rolling out to iOS users in the US, with Android support coming soon. Additionally, Google is introducing a hotel price-tracking feature. Users can activate a toggle below search filters to monitor price changes for hotels on their selected dates. If prices drop significantly, Google will send an automatic email alert. This feature is now available globally on mobile and desktop browsers. These updates aim to provide a seamless trip-planning experience by leveraging AI and enhancing user-friendly tools across Google’s ecosystem.



Ghibli AI Trend Takes Over Celebrities and Brands

OpenAI’s latest feature in ChatGPT-4, Image Generation, has sparked a massive trend on social media, allowing users to transform their photos into the enchanting animation style of Studio Ghibli films. People have been sharing adorable, wide-eyed selfies and creatively reimagining their pets, friends, and family in the signature style of Hayao Miyazaki’s beloved movies. The trend has now caught the attention of celebrities and brands. Renowned personalities like Sachin Tendulkar, Devendra Fadnavis, and Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma have shared their Ghibli-inspired portraits. Major brands such as Airbus and India Post

have also embraced the trend, showcasing unique and artistic adaptations of their visuals. Karan Johar’s Dharma Productions took it a step further by recreating iconic characters from films like Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani, OK Jaanu, Badrinath Ki Dulhania, Shershaah, and Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani in the whimsical Ghibli animation style. With more celebrities and brands joining in, the Ghibli AI trend is proving to be a viral sensation, merging nostalgia with cutting-edge AI technology.



“Chaitra Navratri 2025: Kalash Sthapana Ritual”



Chaitra Navratri 2025 is set to begin on March 30 (Sunday) and will continue until April 7 (Monday), marking nine days of devotion to Goddess Durga. This Hindu festival is widely celebrated across India and by devotees around the world. The festival begins with Ghatasthapana, also known as Kalash Sthapana, a sacred ritual that symbolizes the invocation of divine energy. This ritual is considered one of the most significant aspects of Navratri, as it marks the establishment of a holy space dedicated to the goddess. Kalash Sthapana is performed with great devotion, signifying the presence of Goddess Durga and inviting her blessings for prosperity, health, and spiritual growth. Before performing the

ritual, the designated space is thoroughly cleaned and purified to ensure a sacred connection with the divine. Devotees believe that conducting this ritual with sincerity and faith brings positive energy and success throughout Navratri. Observing the Shubh Muhurat (auspicious time) for Kalash Sthapana is considered crucial for ensuring the ritual’s effectiveness. Priests and devotees follow specific guidelines to perform the ceremony correctly, ensuring that the divine energy is invoked in the most favorable manner. With the festival set to begin soon, temples and households across the country are preparing for the grand celebrations, filled with prayers, fasting, and devotion to Goddess Durga.

RCB Break 17-Year Jinx with 50-Run Victory Over CSK at MA Chidambaram Stadium



Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) secured a historic 50-run win over Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on Friday, breaking a 17-year jinx of never winning a match at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. This victory marked RCB's second-ever win at the venue, with their first coming back in the inaugural season of the IPL in 2008. Invited to bat first, RCB posted a competitive total of 196/7 in their 20 overs. Rajat Patidar was the star with the bat, scoring a well-crafted 51 runs off 32 balls. His knock anchored RCB's innings, and he was well-supported by Phil Salt (32 off 16) and Devdutt Padikkal (27 off 14),

who played vital cameos at the top. Tim David also contributed with a late flourish, scoring an explosive 22 not out off just 8 balls, which included three consecutive sixes in a single over, providing much-needed momentum for the team. For CSK, Noor Ahmad was the standout bowler, taking 3 wickets for 36 runs. Despite his efforts, CSK's bowlers struggled to contain RCB's batting onslaught, with the total being too high for them to chase down. Chasing a challenging total, CSK never really seemed in contention as RCB's bowlers kept up the pressure throughout the innings. Josh Hazlewood was exceptional, finishing with figures of

3/21, effectively dismantling CSK's top order. Yash Dayal and Liam Livingstone also made significant contributions, each picking up two wickets and further tightening the screws on CSK's chase. CSK's batting fell short despite a few individual contributions, and they were ultimately bowled out for 146 runs. RCB's disciplined bowling attack and well-timed batting proved too much for the home side, giving them a much-needed win at a venue where they had struggled for nearly two decades. This victory boosts RCB's confidence as they continue their IPL campaign, looking to push further in the tournament.

Alexandra Eala's Dream Run Ends at Miami Open, Jessica Pegula Advances to Final

Alexandra Eala's incredible run at the Miami Open came to a heartbreaking end on Thursday as she lost to American fourth seed Jessica Pegula in a thrilling three-set semi-final. After 2 hours and 24 minutes of intense play, Pegula emerged victorious with a 7-6 (7/3), 5-7, 6-3 win, securing her place in Saturday's final against world number one Aryna Sabalenka. Eala, ranked 140th in the world, had already made history by defeating three Grand Slam champions — Jelena Ostapenko, Madison Keys, and Iga Swiatek — to reach the semi-finals. The 19-year-old was the lowest-ranked player to make it this far in the tournament's history and was determined to continue her dream run against Pegula.

The match was a rollercoaster, with Pegula gaining the upper hand in the second set by breaking Eala's serve to go 3-1 up. However, Eala fought back fiercely, breaking Pegula three times in the set and eventually serving to level the match at 6-5. Despite the resilient fight, Eala's forehand faltered in the decider, allowing Pegula to break and serve out the match. After the match, Eala expressed her disappointment but remained positive, acknowledging the incredible week she had. "I gave everything I had, I'm half tape, I'm like a mummy. I did everything and I have no regrets," she said. She also reflected on the alignment of stars that had helped her achieve such a remarkable feat and set her sights on continuing her form.



FA Cup Quarter-Finals: Manchester City, Fulham, and Nottingham Forest Eye Historic Runs

As the FA Cup quarter-finals approach this weekend, Manchester City, Fulham, and Nottingham Forest are all looking to make their mark in the competition, each with their own unique challenges and aspirations. Bournemouth Pose Threat to Manchester City Manchester City, struggling in the Premier League this season, face a crucial clash against Bournemouth in the FA Cup, their last chance of silverware. The Sky Blues are still reeling from a surprising 2-1 defeat to the Cherries in November, which marked their first-ever loss to Bournemouth. Since that setback, Pep Guardiola's side has only won once in their last 11 games across all competitions, leaving them battling to secure a Champions League spot next season. A further loss to Bournemouth, who have never



reached the FA Cup semi-finals, would further tarnish what has been a difficult season for the

Premier League giants. Fulham Aim to End FA Cup Drought Fulham will host Crystal Palace on Saturday, hoping to end their 50-year wait for an FA Cup final appearance. The Cottagers have not made it to the final since 1975 and have not reached the semi-finals since 2002. After an impressive victory over holders Manchester United in the fifth round, Marco Silva's side will be looking to make a deep cup run, despite a recent 2-0 loss to Palace in the league. Palace, who have never won the FA Cup, could welcome back striker Jean-Philippe Mateta after recovering from a head injury sustained in a previous match. Nottingham Forest Without Chris Wood Nottingham Forest, in the midst of a dream season, are targeting a place in the FA Cup semi-fi-

nals for the first time since 1991. However, they will be without star striker Chris Wood, who is sidelined due to a hip injury sustained on international duty with New Zealand. Forest, currently third in the Premier League, are pushing for a Champions League spot and hope to continue their cup run despite Wood's absence. Preston's Historic Ambitions Against Villa Preston, the only Championship team remaining in the FA Cup, will face Aston Villa with an eye on an upset. With two FA Cup wins in their history, Preston has not reached the semi-finals since 1964. Meanwhile, Villa, aiming to make their first semi-final appearance in 10 years, will look to build on their solid form this season, having already made it to the Champions League quarter-finals.

Jaismine Clinches Gold Trophy at Railways retain trophy

At the Elite Women's National Boxing Championships in Greater Noida, Commonwealth Games medallist Jaismine Lamboria and two-time Asian Champion Pooja Rani triumphed in contrasting fashion to secure gold medals. The Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) emerged as the overall champions, clinching the team trophy with nine medals, including five golds. Jaismine, representing the Services Sports Control Board (SSCB), maintained her dominance throughout the tournament, delivering a flawless performance in the featherweight final. From the first bell, the Paris Olympian

displayed a mix of relentless aggression and impeccable technique, overpowering Haryana's Priya. The Birmingham CWG bronze medallist's control over the match was undeniable, and she sealed a unanimous decision victory. Following her stellar performance, Jaismine was awarded the top performer prize, which included a ₹50,000 cash award. Reflecting on her victory,



ry, Jaismine expressed satisfaction with her improvement throughout the tournament. On the other hand, Pooja Rani faced a much tougher challenge in the 80kg final against Lalfakmawi Ralte of the All India Police. Despite a hard-fought contest, the Tokyo Olympian edged out Ralte with a 4-3 decision. Pooja, a former Asian Games medallist, claimed her ninth gold at the Na-

tional Championships. She shared her appreciation for the tough competition she faced and praised her ability to overcome the challenges posed by Ralte's power. Railways' strong performance in the tournament, with five golds and four bronze medals, ensured their place atop the team standings. Haryana followed closely in second with two golds, three silvers, and one bronze, while the Police team secured one gold, four silvers, and two bronzes. Services also had a perfect campaign, with Jaismine and Sakshi leading the charge, ensuring a 100 percent win record for their team.



Novak Djokovic showcased his rising form as he secured a 6-3, 7-6 (7-4) win over American Sebastian Korda in the quarter-finals of the Miami Open on Thursday, March 27, 2025. The match, which was rescheduled from Wednesday night, was a pivotal moment in Djokovic's campaign for his seventh Miami Open title and his 100th professional victory. The 37-year-old Serbian was in fine form, particularly in the second set, where he made an impressive comeback from a 4-1 and 5-2 deficit. Djokovic fought back with determination to win the tiebreaker, ending the match in one hour and 24 minutes. He served an ace on match point and posted an 83% first-serve percentage, a major factor in

his victory. Djokovic credited his serving as the key to his second-set resurgence, calling it his best serving performance in a long time. With this win, Djokovic advances to the semifinals, where he will face Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov. Djokovic holds a 12-1 record against Dimitrov, who reached the Miami Open finals in 2024. Djokovic is aiming for his seventh title at this tournament, having won all six of his previous titles at the event's former venue, Key Biscayne. Meanwhile, in the women's draw, the upcoming final is set between third-seeded Jessica Pegula and top seed Aryna Sabalenka. The two are set for a rematch of the 2024 U.S. Open final, which was won by Sabalenka.



Swapna & Priyanka Dutt’s Monumental Feat



The inaugural Women in Entertainment Power List by The Hollywood Reporter India highlights some of the most influential women reshaping the Indian entertainment industry. The March cover features five trailblazing women: the dynamic sister duo Swapna Dutt and Priyanka Dutt, alongside Zoya Akhtar, Alia Bhatt, and Nayanthara. In this special edition, they open up about their journeys, early struggles, and the challenges of balancing personal and professional boundaries while redefining excellence in showbiz.

Telugu producers Swapna Dutt and Priyanka Dutt have left an undeniable mark on the industry through their production houses, Swapna Cinema and Vyjayanthi Movies, delivering consistent blockbusters. Their inclusion in The Hollywood Reporter India is a historic achievement, as no Telugu filmmaker has previously received this recognition. Their success further solidifies the growing impact of women in Indian cinema, proving that talent and determination can break barriers and set new industry benchmarks.

Hrithik Roshan To Make Directorial Debut With Krrish 4



Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan is all set to step into the director's chair with the highly anticipated superhero film Krrish 4. The project was officially announced earlier today, marking a significant milestone in Hrithik's career. While it is yet to be confirmed whether he will reprise his iconic superhero role or introduce a new lead, fans are eagerly awaiting further details.

Hrithik began his journey in the industry as an assistant director on his father Rakesh Roshan's films Khudgarzi and Karan Arjun. Rakesh had previously helmed the Krrish franchise, including Koi Mil Gaya, Krrish, and Krrish 3. Now, Krrish 4 will be jointly produced by Rakesh Roshan and Bollywood's leading filmmaker Aditya Chopra under Yash Raj Films.

Announcing the news, Rakesh Roshan shared a heartfelt post on Instagram with Hrithik. "Duggu, 25 years ago I launched you as an actor, and today, along with Aditya Chopra, I launch you as a director for our most ambitious film, Krrish 4," he wrote. Hrithik's girlfriend, actor Saba Azad, reacted with heart emojis, celebrating his new journey.

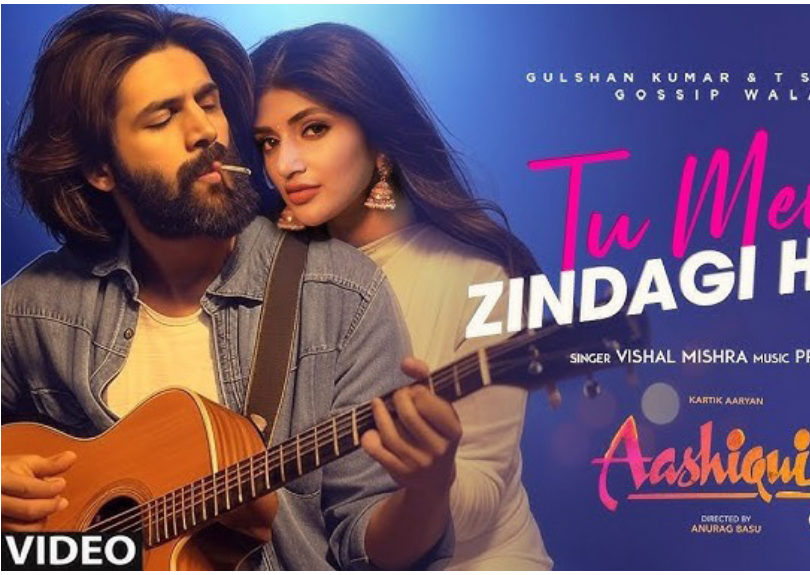


Ram (Nithiin), an orphan, grows up witnessing the hardships of fellow orphans suffering from hunger. Determined to help, he devises intelligent schemes to steal from the wealthy and distribute the money to the needy. Meanwhile, a ruthless villain (Devadatta Nage) sets out to

expand his international marijuana business and targets Rudrakonda village, known for its high-demand special variety of marijuana. Reena Vasudev (Sreeleela), the daughter of AV Pharma's Australian head, Abhinav Vasudev (Siju), visits Rudrakonda, setting off a series of in-

Kartik Aaryan & Sreeleela’s BTS Sparks Excitement

Bollywood star Kartik Aaryan has shared an exclusive behind-the-scenes (BTS) glimpse from his upcoming untitled film, directed by Anurag Basu. This project is highly anticipated as it marks the Bollywood debut of South Indian actress Sreeleela. In the newly released image, Kartik is seen gazing at Sreeleela as they sit amidst a stunning tea garden, with his rugged new look—long hair and a thick beard—stealing the spotlight. Adding a hint of romance, Kartik holds two cups of tea, suggesting a heartfelt scene. The duo is currently filming in North Bengal's scenic tea gardens, with several BTS pictures surfacing online since Wednesday. One standout image features Kartik riding a bike with Sreeleela behind him, his bandaged hand hinting at intense action sequences.



Rakul Preet Singh Reveals She Rejected Puri Jagannadh’s Offer



MAD Square follows Laddu (Vishnu Oi), who ends up in Tihar Central Jail, striking fear among inmates. Curious about his past, they ask how he got there. Laddu reveals how his friends—Manoj (Ram Nithin), Ashok (Narne Nithin), and Damodhar (Sangeeth Sobhan)—turned his wedding into chaos, triggering unexpected events that landed him in jail. The film thrives on its humor, with

Actress Rakul Preet Singh recently shared insights about her film journey. She revealed that she entered modeling during college and had little knowledge of South Indian cinema. Her debut opportunity came from the Kannada film Gilli after her father spoke with the filmmakers. She fell in love with acting and decided to pursue it full-time. Rakul disclosed that after her debut, director Puri Ja-

gannadh offered her a film, requesting 70 days of her dates. However, due to her lack of industry awareness, she declined the offer and missed several good opportunities. Speaking about her marriage, she said she and Jackky Bhagnani shared similar values, leading to their union with family blessings. She also confirmed that marriage hasn't affected her acting career, as she continues to take on new projects.

